

Committee on Financial Services
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Committee on House Administration
Democratic Steering & Policy
Committee
Democratic Caucus; Chair, Committee
on Organization, Study & Review
Chair, Speaker's Task Force on
Ethics Enforcement
www.house.gov/capuano



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Michael E. Capuano
8th District, Massachusetts

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1530 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2108
(202) 225-5111
FAX: (202) 225-9322

DISTRICT OFFICES:
110 FIRST STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02141
(617) 621-6208
FAX: (617) 621-8628

ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CAMPUS LIBRARY
ROOM 211

December 19, 2007

Dear Colleague:

The Special Task Force on Ethics Enforcement was established in January of 2007 by the Speaker and Minority Leader to study the creation of an independent ethics enforcement entity within the House of Representatives. Enclosed is a copy of the Report from myself, Rep. David Price, Rep. Bobby Scott, and Rep. Betty McCollum – Members of the Task Force. The report contains a copy of the proposed resolution, H.Res.895, which would amend House Rules. A one page summary is also enclosed. There may be concurring or dissenting views added to this report later which will be sent as they are received.

Each Member of the House has an opinion as to whether our ethics process should contain an element independent of the Membership of this House. Personally, I believe that the proposal we submit offers the best aspects of the concept – transparency and an end to the “old boy network.” I also believe that this proposal avoids the worst facets of the concept – subjecting Members and staff to unnecessary attacks on our reputations and allowing people to render final judgment on our actions without fully understanding all aspects of the matters at hand. Finally, Members of the House will be able to honestly tell their constituents that future widely reported allegations against Members will be fairly and transparently reviewed.

Although some have criticized this proposal because it is not perfect in their estimation, there are other well respected observers who have praised it. We already enjoy the support of Common Cause, the U.S. Public Interest Research Groups (U.S. PIRG), Norman Ornstein at American Enterprise Institute, and Thomas Mann at the Brookings Institution. We expect others will see the merit in this proposal as well.

It should also be noted that as you may recall, the Task Force was considering a proposal in June that would have allowed anyone to file an official ethics complaint and would have required any entity doing so to disclose its financial supporters. Please note that neither of these provisions is included in the current proposal.

Finally, please know that each Member of the Task Force welcomes all questions, suggestions and commentary. Although we spent many months considering this matter, we all realize how important, delicate and intricate such proposals are to each of our colleagues and none of us suffers from a “pride of authorship.” We truly encourage and welcome your input.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael E. Capuano".

Michael E. Capuano